

REMARKS

The Office Action mailed September 19, 2005, has been received and its contents carefully considered. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding rejections are respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Turning first to the objection to claims 3, 13, 16 and 18, these claims have been amended to correct their dependencies in line with the comments made by the Examiner. Accordingly, withdrawal of this objection is now respectfully requested.

Claims 1-21 were rejected in various combinations as being anticipated by or rendered obvious by Whetstone (U.S. Patent No. 6,408,497), Hering et al., and for some claims further in view of Calvert. Without conceding the propriety of these rejections, each of the independent claims 1, 7, 12 and 17 has been amended.

Specifically, each of the claims has been amended to recite a system involving both (1) the valve stem having the annular groove, and (2) the two-part tool having the first and second faces. Each of these claims has also been amended to recite that the stem has a vent extending from the annular groove into a central bore of the stem. This feature is supported at least by the example described in paragraph [0029] of the present specification, and FIGS. 1-5, which illustrate a venting channel 24 in the stem 10 which leads to a further vent 26. It will be appreciated that, as described in the specification, the venting channel permits air originally in the volume of the dovetailed groove to escape but when the o-ring enters and fills the dovetailed groove.

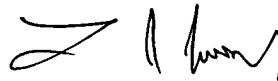
The feature of a vent extending inward from the dovetailed groove is neither taught nor suggested by any of Whetstone, Hering et al., or Calvert, whether taken singularly or in any combination with each other. Therefore, at least the amended claims are believed patentable over these citations, and withdrawal of the rejections under §§ 102 and 103 are respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and allowance of the application are believed in order, and such action is earnestly solicited. Should the Examiner believe that a telephone conference would be helpful in expediting prosecution of the application; the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at 202-861-1696.

In the event this paper is not timely filed, Applicants petition for an appropriate extension of time. Please charge any fee deficiencies or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 50-2036 with reference to Attorney Docket No. **87358.3020**.

Respectfully submitted,

BAKER & HOSTETLER LLP



Leo J. Jennings
Reg. No. 32,902

Date: December 2, 2005

Washington Square, Suite 1100
1050 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036
Phone: (202) 861-1500
Fax: (202) 861-1783